

## **Candidate Obama vs. President Obama**

*October 20, 2009*

Even as he campaigned on a platform of change and transparency, an examination of Barack Obama's comments during the election—and his actions since taking office—indicates that on both politics and policy, the President has changed his tune on numerous issues of relevance to the proposed government takeover of health care, which may lead many to wonder where exactly he stands:

**Then:** "Senator McCain wants to pay for his plan by taxing your health care benefits for the first time in history."

— Barack Obama, [speech](#) in Roanoke, Virginia, October 17, 2008

**Now:** "This reform will charge insurance plans a fee for their most expensive policies..."

— Barack Obama, [address](#) to a joint session of Congress, September 9, 2009

**Then:** "You will not have to change [health insurance] plans. For those who have insurance now, nothing will change under the Obama plan—except that you will pay less."

— Obama campaign [handout](#), "Questions and Answers on Health Care Plan"

**Now:** "I mean—when I say if you have your plan and you like it and your doctor has a plan, or you have a doctor and you like your doctor that you don't have to change plans, what I'm saying is the government is not going to make you change plans under health reform."

— Barack Obama, White House [press conference](#), June 23, 2009

**Then:** "Massachusetts has a mandate right now. They have exempted 20 percent of the uninsured because they have concluded that that 20 percent can't afford it. In some cases, there are people who are paying fines and still can't afford it, so now they're worse off than they were. They don't have health insurance and they're paying a fine."

— Barack Obama, Democratic primary [debate](#), February 21, 2008

**Now:** "Under my plan, individuals will be required to carry basic health insurance..."

— Barack Obama, [address](#) to a joint session of Congress, September 9, 2009

**Then:** "If they cannot afford [health insurance]...what are you going to do about it? Are you going to fine them? Are you going to garnish people's wages?"

— Barack Obama, Democratic primary [debate](#), January 31, 2008

**Now:** "For us to say that you've got to take a responsibility to get health insurance is absolutely not a tax increase."

— Barack Obama, trying to explain tax penalties for refusing to purchase government-forced health insurance, [interview](#) with George Stephanopoulos, September 20, 2009

**Then:** "I can make a firm pledge. Under my plan, no family making less than \$250,000 a year will see any form of tax increase. Not your income tax, not your payroll tax, not your capital gains taxes, not any of your taxes."

— Barack Obama, [Rally](#) in Dover, New Hampshire, September 12, 2008

**Now:** "The one commitment that I've been clear about is I don't want that final one-third of the cost of health care to be completely shouldered on the backs of middle-class families who are already struggling in a difficult economy. And so if I see a proposal that is primarily funded through taxing middle-class families, I'm going to be opposed to that because I think there are better ideas to do it."

— Barack Obama, White House [press conference](#), July 22, 2009

**Then:** "It turns out that Senator McCain would pay for part of his [health care] plan by making drastic cuts in Medicare...even though Medicare is already facing a looming shortfall."

— Barack Obama, [speech](#) in Roanoke, Virginia, October 17, 2008

**Now:** "The only thing this plan would eliminate is the hundreds of billions of dollars in waste and fraud [in Medicare]..."

— Barack Obama, [address](#) to a joint session of Congress, September 9, 2009

**Then:** "The Obama [health care] plan will cost between \$50-65 billion a year when fully phased in."

— Obama campaign [handout](#), "Questions and Answers on Health Care Plan"

**Now:** "Add it all up, and the plan I'm proposing will cost around \$900 billion over 10 years..."

— Barack Obama, [address](#) to a joint session of Congress, September 9, 2009

**Then:** "What we will do is, we'll have the [health care] negotiations televised on C-SPAN, so that people can see who is making arguments on behalf of their constituents, and who are making arguments on behalf of the drug companies or the insurance companies."

— Barack Obama, town hall [meeting](#) in Chester, Virginia, July 21, 2008

**Now:** "At a certain point you start getting into all kinds of different meetings—Senate Finance is having a meeting, the House is having a meeting....I don't think there are a lot of secrets going on in there."

— Barack Obama, trying to explain closed-door health care negotiations,  
White House [press conference](#), July 22, 2009

At best, the significant changes in position show the differences between lofty campaign rhetoric and the realities of governing; at worst, they reveal an Administration willing to abandon many of its key campaign promises in order to pass its government takeover of health care. Regardless of whether or not one agrees with the President's policy positions—either those outlined "then" or "now"—many may wonder what exactly the President believes in—and, given his repeated reversals, why the American people should believe in him.

---

#### STAFF CONTACT

---

For more information or questions, please contact Chris Jacobs at 6-2302.